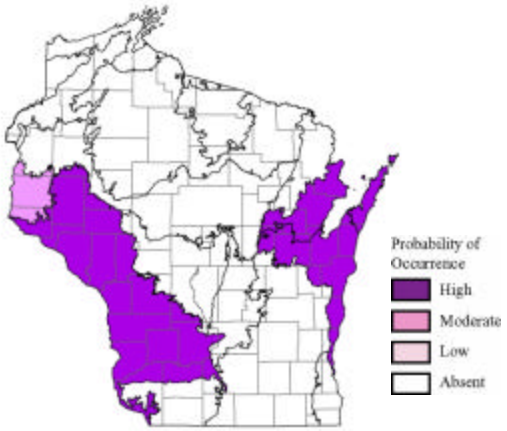
Great Egret (*Ardea alba*)

Species Assessment Scores*

State rarity:	5
State threats:	2
State population trend:	5
Global abundance:	3
Global distribution:	1
Global threats:	2
Global population trend:	1
Mean Risk Score:	2.7
Area of importance:	2

* Please see the Description of Vertebrate Species Summaries (Section 3.1.1) for definitions of criteria and scores.



Ecological Landscape Associations
Please note that this is not a range map. Shading does not imply that the species is present throughout the Landscape, but represents the probability that the species occurs somewhere in the Landscape.

Landscape -community Combinations of Highest Ecological Priority

Ecological Landscape	Community
Central Lake Michigan Coastal	Emergent marsh
Central Lake Michigan Coastal	Floodplain forest
Central Lake Michigan Coastal	Lake Michigan
Central Lake Michigan Coastal	Submergent marsh
Central Lake Michigan Coastal	Warmwater rivers
Northern Lake Michigan Coastal	Emergent marsh
Northern Lake Michigan Coastal	Floodplain forest
Northern Lake Michigan Coastal	Lake Michigan
Northern Lake Michigan Coastal	Submergent marsh
Northern Lake Michigan Coastal	Warmwater rivers
Western Coulee and Ridges	Emergent marsh
Western Coulee and Ridges	Floodplain forest
Western Coulee and Ridges	Submergent marsh
Western Coulee and Ridges	Warmwater rivers
Western Prairie	Emergent marsh
Western Prairie	Warmwater rivers

Threats and Issues

- Degradation of wetland breeding habitat through loss of concentrations of large trees suitable for colonial nesting in floodplain forests and loss of habitat due to wetland drainage and river channelization (the latter causing loss of shallow backwaters) constitute significant threats.
- Reduction or elimination of food resources due to contaminants.
- Relatively high levels of PCBs, DDT, DDD, DDE and other contaminants have been reported in rookeries along the Upper Mississippi River. Contaminants may have caused colony declines along the Upper Mississippi River in the past.

- Human disturbance is most deleterious during incubation and when young are in the nest. Disturbed adults may fly from the nest leaving eggs or young exposed to the elements. Disturbance increases the chance that young will leave the nest prematurely, either falling to the ground or into another nest resulting in certain death. In some cases, habituation to predictable events (boaters) may occur, but at other times colony abandonment may occur.
- Stochastic events (e.g., tornadoes, heavy storms) can cause widespread nesting failures and may result in colony abandonment (e.g., Four Mile Island at Horicon Marsh).

Priority Conservation Actions

- Work with the WDNR's Landowner Incentive Program to develop strategies for protection of extant colonies. Develop a list of protection options for use by landowners.
- Include identification, monitoring, and protection of colony sites into landscape planning efforts, including community comprehensive plans and WDNR master plans.
- Develop a comprehensive management approach that provides a framework for addressing landscape-scale opportunities for colonial waterbirds within each Ecological Landscape.
- Experiment with techniques to promote tree regeneration at colony sites and to test the effectivenes of artificial nesting platforms at selective sites (e.g., Four Mile Island).
- A long-term monitoring program is needed at extant colony sites to document trends over time.
- Develop informational materials for private landowners and update informational and educational materials for the public.
- Wisconsin should initiate the organization of an inter-agency partnership of state and federal agencies, private, and non-profit conservation partners to determine common goals and strategies for great egrets and other colonial waterbirds along the Upper Mississippi River.